

**WASHINGTON** - Congressman Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) and Senator Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) met yesterday with Poland's Ambassador Robert Kupiecki to discuss the US-Poland partnership, including advancing the bicameral, bipartisan legislation to include Poland in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP) prior to President Obama's inaugural visit to Poland on May 27-28.

On March 7, 2011, Senator Kirk and Congressman Quigley spearheaded the introduction of the Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Act in the Senate and House (S.497/H.R. 959), which aims to update and modernize VWP requirements, ultimately making Poland and other U.S. allies eligible to participate in VWP.

"I was very pleased to meet with Ambassador Kupiecki and Senator Kirk as we continue to work toward Poland's inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program," said Rep. Quigley. "This has long been a priority for me, and I hope that we'll continue to have the President's strong support for this critical initiative. I would also encourage Polish-Americans across the country to urge their representatives to support this effort, so that we may broaden our coalition and move forward."

"I appreciated President Obama's commitment to expand the VWP to include Poland, as he promised President Komorowski last December, and look forward to working with him to deliver on that promise," Senator Kirk said. "Poland is one of the few major democratic allies currently excluded from the program. That is no way to treat a friend, especially when over 2,500 Polish troops are fighting alongside our soldiers in Afghanistan."

"For Poland, partnership and ongoing dialogue with the US Administration as well as the United States Congress on all matters of mutual interest including security, economy and democratization continues to be of strategic importance," Ambassador Kupiecki said. "Poland hopes that President Obama's upcoming visit later this month will move this partnership forward. Building on President Obama's declaration this past December regarding Poland's accession into the VWP, we applaud Senator Kirk as well as Senator Mikulski and Congressman Quigley for their steadfast leadership on this issue and remain confident that it will reach a positive resolution in the 112th Congress."

On April 26, 2011, the co-sponsors of the Visa Waiver Program legislation sent a letter to President Obama, applauding him for his visit to Poland and asking for his endorsement of the bill. [The letter is available here.](#)

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